

Treating the Flu at Home



- The flu can often be treated at home.
 - Home is the safest place to be if flu symptoms are not severe.
 - Check with your provider before going in to get tested for the flu since this may result in an unnecessary visit to your provider and cause exposure to others.
 - If you or someone you live with has been told by a health care provider that you have the flu or may have the flu, be sure to follow the advice of your health care provider.
 - Antiviral medication may be prescribed to reduce the symptoms of flu and are known as Tamiflu or Relenza. If prescribed, this medication should be started within the first 48 hours of flu symptoms. It may also be given to prevent getting the flu, such as when a person is living with someone who has the flu or if you are at risk for serious complications from the flu. Antiviral medications are NOT prescribed for everyone with the flu.
 - If you have been prescribed antiviral medication, be sure to take all the doses as directed.
 - Rest and stay home for at least 24 hours after you no longer have a fever, and while not taking medications to reduce fever.
 - High fever often causes a person to feel cold and want more blankets. However, the person with a fever may actually be very hot and extra blankets could cause the fever to go higher.
 - Acetaminophen (brand name Tylenol) or ibuprofen (brand names Motrin or Advil) can be used to reduce fever, relieve headaches and general aches and pains. Follow the package instructions or doctor's orders. Do not give aspirin or products containing aspirin to persons under the age of 18, research has established a link between Reye's Syndrome and the use of aspirin in children.
 - Drink plenty of fluids, especially if running a fever.
 - Hard candies or lozenges can help soothe a sore throat.
 - Good hand hygiene is essential in preventing the spread of germs. Clean your hands frequently, especially after coughing or sneezing. If possible, use disposable paper towels when drying hands and discard after use. Or have each person in the home use their own cloth towel for drying their hands after hand washing. Hand sanitizer can be used to clean your hands, if not visibly soiled.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth as germs spread very easily this way.
 - Face masks can be used to prevent further spread of the virus.
 - If you have severe chronic medical conditions, and you have been exposed to a person with the flu, contact your health care provider to determine if preventive treatment is needed.
 - The VA Cares about you.
 - If you have further questions or wish to speak with someone during clinic hours, please contact your Primary Care Provider or local medical center.
- Hot Springs 1-800-764-5370 Ft Meade 1-800-743-1070
- If you are calling after clinic hours, please call the VISN 23 Nurse VA Health Care Advice Line at 1-866-687-7382.